ORGAN INSTITUTE

QUARTERLY

WINTER, 1952

Articles

by

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ORGAN INSTITUTE QUARTERLY

Volume 2, Number 1 Winter 1952

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Published four times yearly — winter, spring, summer, autumn — by the Organ Institute at 104 Salem Street, Andover, Massachusetts. Price: 25 cents a copy, annual subscription $1. Application for entry as second-class matter is pending at Andover, Massachusetts.

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Console of the organ in the Church of Loretta, Prague

The Short Octave

Louis L. Balogh

The author, an eminent musicologist and member of the faculty of John Carroll University in Cleveland, is an authority on old organs in Central Europe, which he observed at first hand as a boy.

The curious photograph of the two-manual organ console in the Church of Loretta, Prague, appearing in the last issue of the Institute Bulletin (and reproduced again, opposite), prompted this article. The picture of the organ showed a 45-note manual, E – c^3, and an 18-note pedal, C – a^1, the lowest F sharp and G sharp in the manuals having 'built-up' keys. Innocent as this seems, it harks back to an important historical fact in the evolution of organ compass and makes it apparent that the "Passacaglia" of Johann Sebastian would not have a ghost of a chance on the instrument.

The strange 'built-up' arrangement and the lowest note being E signify that the Prague organ has the 'broken' or 'short' lowest octave. This term was used to describe a special arrangement in the lowest octaves of old organs (16th to 18th century), in both manuals and pedals, whereby in place of the unwanted F sharp and G sharp, these keys sounded D and E, while the apparent low E sounded the lowest C. This, to modern eyes a seemingly cumbersome arrangement, springs from the teachings of the diatonic system of Guido d'Arezzo (*circa* 995), which recognized only one chromatic tone, the B flat, and for a long time regarded F as its lowest note. As long as the organ pedal part was not taking an independent line of the contrapuntal texture, but was used mainly for pedal point and for supporting congregational singing, it was sufficient to have only the tonic, dominant, and subdominant notes in the lowest octave. As the demand for further extension came, in order to secure the most important missing low E, D, C without a costly extension of the keyboards, they added one more key for C (the apparent E) to the left of the existing low F and inserted the D and C as short, or, in today's nomenclature, as black keys, F sharp and G sharp. (Remember B flat was already there.) This arrangement, referred to by contemporary writers as the *Mi-Re-Ut*, was very common; and many builders stuck to it even beyond the 18th century. Girolamo Diruta (born 1560), a famous organist-monk of his time, refers to this *Mi-Re-Ut* arrangement in his "Il Transilvano" (1593), a treatise on organs and organ playing, which was regarded as a far-advanced work at the time of its publication. True to the customary method of that time, this work is written in a form of dialogue between Transilvano and the author Diruta. The great distinction between playing a clavier and playing an organ is discussed, along with the position of hands and fingers while playing.

Hints are given as to the operation of the pedal, which of course has the *Mi-Re-Ut* system, a *conditio sine qua non* of the period.

The slow progress and the conservatism of the builders and the players, who were not anxious to learn new ways (even in those days), and the fact that organs, for centuries, were handed down from one church to another, prolonged the existence of numerous specimens with short octaves in Central Europe even to the present day, i.e., before the destruction of the last war. An occasional variation in the order of the lowest keys was that on some organs the white keys sounded E, F, G, A, B; the black keys, C, D, B flat. More often, the white keys operated C, F, G, A, B; the black, D, E, B flat. The only truly Guidonian short octave I have seen was on the organ in an old abandoned parish church in northern Hungary. The pedal had only B flat as a chromatic note and had only 6 or 7 keys in all. (Perhaps the 'Guidonian' spirit has induced some of our electronic-organ designers to reduce the compass of their pedals!) This organ, a very small instrument, had been transferred to its present location from the lower, so-called "cellar" church, which dated back to the 12th century.

Additional evidence of the late survival of the short octave in the pedals is supplied through the personal experience of the writer's father, a retired organist, still living in Hungary. The elder Balogh got his lifelong organist position in 1890 at a church having a new organ built by Matthias Mauracher, of Salzburg, Austria. He was greatly surprised, he relates, that this organ, besides its other 'modern' features (especially that of a very light touch), had a complete chromatic pedal, C to d^1, 27 notes. This was confusing to him, because other parish churches where he served his apprenticeship had the short octave, even though the instruments were larger, and in spite of the fact that they were built by the famous Viennese builder Moser, father-in-law of the above-mentioned Mauracher.

These are just a few scattered examples to prove that the power of tradition was much more evident fifty or sixty years ago, and that the chromatic 30-note pedal, required by the works of the great Johann Sebastian, was not at all universal. Unfortunately, the photograph of the Prague organ is not dated. However, it could have been taken just recently, since some churches miraculously escaped the destruction of the last war and its consequences.* On those old instruments belonging to Central European parish churches, where the principal purpose was to accompany congregational singing, one is very likely to find the 'broken compass' or short octave keyboards and pedalboard. As clearly shown on the photograph of the Prague organ console, the compass of the manuals and pedal apparently ends on E — but only apparently. Actually, the lowest note sounded a C, while the more-often-required D and E pipes were connected

*The pictures of the Prague organs were taken from a book which was sent to the Editor of the *Organ Institute Quarterly* by Jaroslav Vojtek, organist of Broadcasting Station Prague. Beneath a picture of the organ and interior of the Church of Emmaus, Mr. Vojtek wrote, "Church destroyed by English or Americans 1945 (air raid)." By inference, therefore, the other organs and churches shown in the book were undamaged and still intact. (Ed.)

to the F sharp and G sharp keys. We may also mention that the missing low C sharp, D sharp, F sharp, G sharp could be played in the upper octave of the pedal. As we know, the pitch of early pedals was often much confused. Pedal stops of parish church organs were usually limited to the big and the small 'boom' (in England and America, usually an Open 16′ and a Bourdon 16′; in Europe, a wooden Violone 16′ and a Bourdon 16′, sometimes a noisy Fagott 16′ instead of the Violone). Notes above the center C of the short octave pedalboard would usually sound the respective notes of the lower octave, a very convenient arrangement, to have some notes in two locations. (An ingenious colleague, for the sake of convenience, used to connect the top F sharp and G pedals to F whenever he played that popular 'war-horse' the Widor Toccata!) The number of notes that had two locations depended on whether the instrument had 12, 13, or more pedal pipes. My guess is that the arrangement of the Prague organ pedals is:

	3	5	11	2		4		7		9	
Black keys	D	E	B flat	C sharp		D sharp		F sharp		G sharp	
White keys	C	F	G	A	B	c	d	e	f	g	a
	1	6	8	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

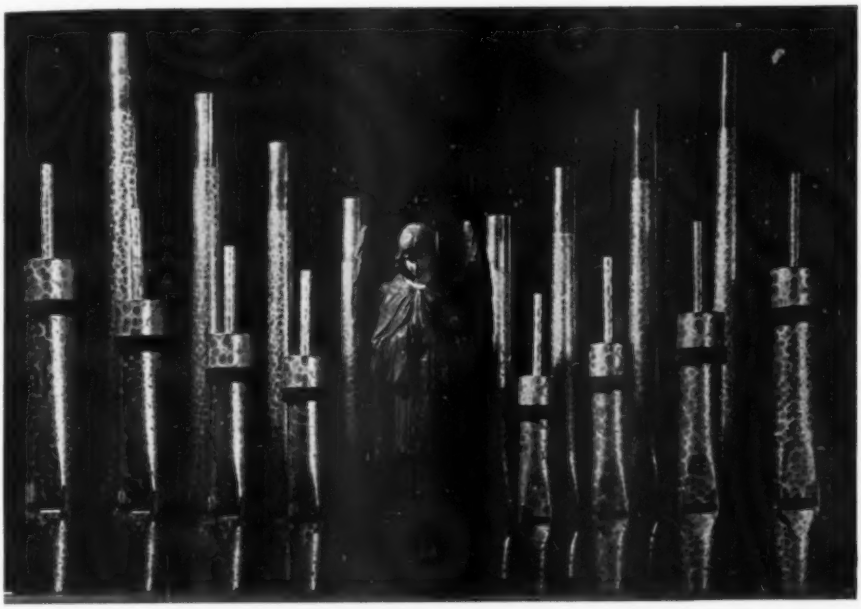
Small letters indicate pitches an octave higher. Numbers show the order of actual sounds, from lowest to highest. In all, there are 18 keys and 18 notes, with no duplications. The lowest octave is available in a chromatic form by 'grass-hoppering' all over the pedalboard. For obvious reasons pedal couplers were missing on these instruments.

On less pretentious organs, as mentioned before, the higher keys simply sounded the respective low notes, as the main purpose was to supply good, fat, booming bass notes to the obstreperous congregational singing. And when I say obstreperous, I mean it. One who never heard a continental congregation wholeheartedly sing their favorite hymns in their native tongue has no idea of the ponderous volume and the psychological effect of this phenomenon! The congregation sometimes became so independent and emphatic in their 'rendition' of the hymn that, in their overheated zeal and ambition, they left the key. There was nothing else to do but 'jump' into their new key without modulation. It was those moments of trying to decide when to jump, while the congregation was still in the 'cracks,' that made those deep, dark circles under the eyes of the organists, and not what their enemies usually thought. Can you believe that good-sized organs, 40 stops and over, usually out in an open position without a swell box, with all the Mixtures and Mutations drawn, could not dominate the congregational singing in those vast churches? Indeed, it was necessary to know the hymns in several keys, because the immense crowds during the most important feasts were much given to 'taking the bit in their teeth.' Brother, you needed that 'boom' in the pedal, which was probably the only thing which 'hinged' you to the unruly singing of the congregation!

After this digression, let us get back to the photograph — to the built-up keys on the manuals. Why were they built up? For the reason that they were doing double duty. Since the short octave was less popular in the manuals, many organs which had this arrangement in the pedals would not have any trace of it in the manuals. The Prague organ evidently belongs to the transition period. That is, the complete chromatic octave was still missing at the bottom, but some of the missing notes were made available by the two built-up black keys. The 'lower floor' of these keys sounded F sharp, G sharp, while the 'upper floor,' as in the pedal, sounded D and E. The low C sharp and D sharp were still missing from the manuals, but they were seldom needed in service playing. To assure smooth and independent operation of the built-up keys, the F sharp and G sharp were hollow, allowing the 'upper floors' to operate without interference. Of course, as we know, atmospheric conditions presented plenty of impediments to smooth operation in the tracker period.

In closing, it may be said that, as in every profession, firsthand experience is most important for the organ student. As youngsters we used to go on hikes, taking trips to seek out old historic instruments. In this way we had a splendid opportunity to examine organs in ancient monasteries of Central Europe, built not by the Silbermanns and Schnitgers, but by unknown, small craftsmen of the neighborhood. These instruments often had arrangements similar to the Prague organ, and also other interesting features, of which there is no place for a description in this article. Just to mention a few, we used to get a great 'kick' out of the 'milking'-type organs. These were small instruments in which the wind was supplied by a primitive bellows operated by two leather straps. The organist had to have the aid of a pumper, as, in spite of small size and short compass, being mostly without or with just a few pedals, they were not 'portative' but 'positive,' or stationary instruments. The work of pumping with the aid of the straps strongly resembled the operation of milking a cow! In a few old-timers there was a feature which, in my opinion, would be very practical even today. This was a lever arrangement conveniently operated by knobs in the keyboard cheeks, whereby one could bring in a set of harmonium reeds, thus transforming the pipe organ into a reed organ. For a separate wind supply to these reeds, there was a sliding door opening in front of a pedal for foot pumping. Just think what a boon this would be to organists of today, should the power fail during a service! Pipe organ and reed organ in one!

It is interesting to note that these antique organs were faithfully preserved in those countries until the last war, or, better to say, until the Nazis or the Russian 'liberators' entered the country. At the conservatories every organ student was obliged to take a subject known as 'Organology." These were classes teaching the history, care, construction, and traditions of the organ. The revival of such study for present-day students would be most welcome from the standpoint of improving the professional knowledge of organists.



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WILFRID PELLETIER

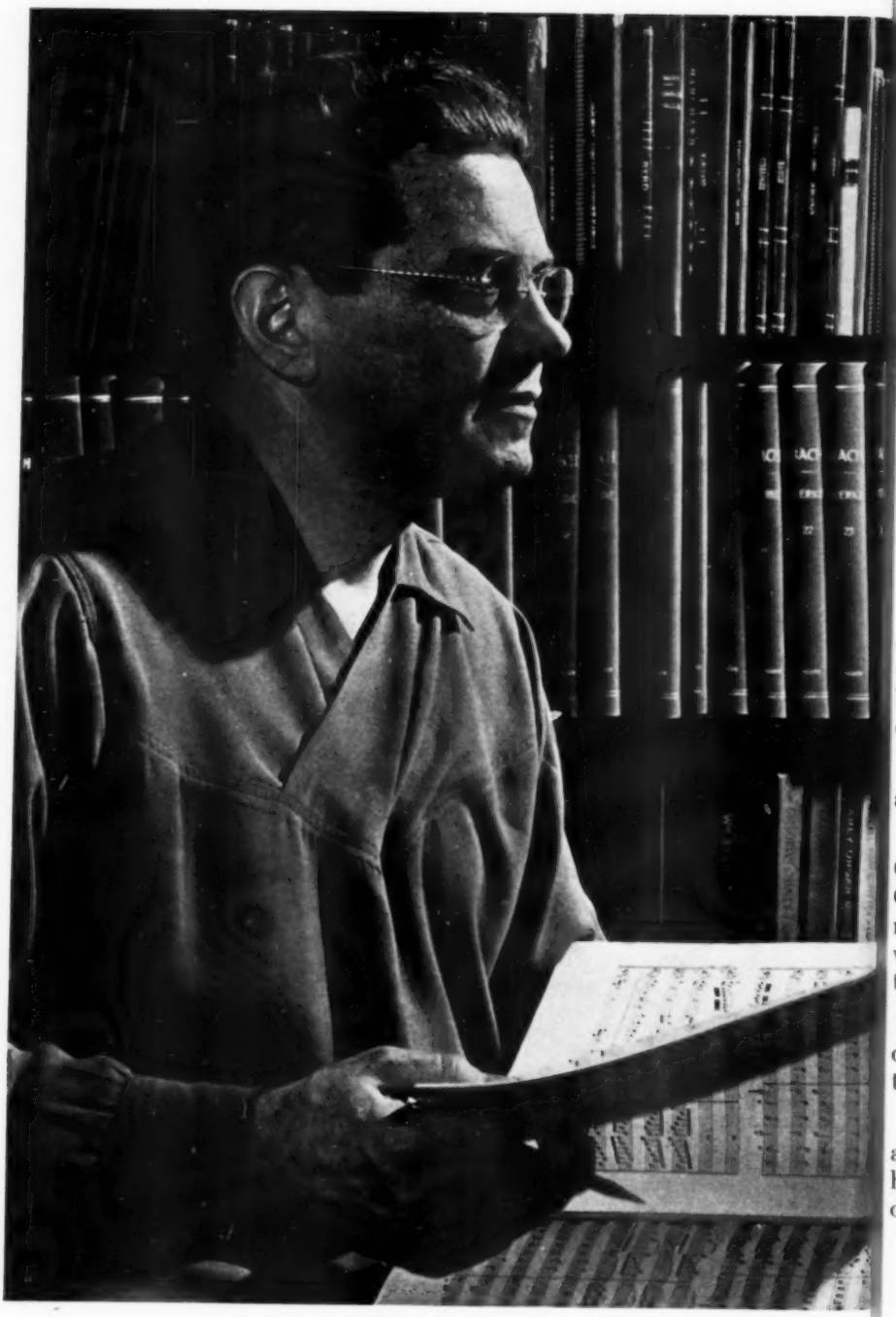
"Pelly" is known to thousands of radio fans as a conductor whose lucid readings and meticulous clarity of detail enhance their enjoyment of the music he conducts.

He remembers the first time he conducted. "I was a very small boy, and my father had taken me to a concert he was conducting. I waited in the wings and watched him, fascinated by the sweep of his arm and the motions of his hands, enthralled by the sounds that arose when he did these things." This small boy suddenly stalked out upon the stage, climbed to the podium, and solemnly waved his hands at the astonished musicians! At nine, he was playing regular engagements as a drummer (like Haydn). While still in his teens, he was engaged as an assistant conductor by the Montreal Opera Company. "I was prouder of that job than any I have had since."

A pupil of Philipp, Rousseau, and Widor, at nineteen he came to the United States in quest of a job. In a sudden emergency, Giulio Gatti-Casazza remembered the French boy and his quick intelligence. When Pelletier got to the Metropolitan Opera House, he found "the red carpet rolled out." It was all over in a few minutes. The young man sat beside the great man's desk. Mr. Gatti asked a few pointed questions and then "the sphinx nodded and I was on my way out, very bewildered to have been engaged as an assistant conductor."

Appointed a full conductor at the Met in 1922, he has since conducted operas and orchestra concerts all over the United States and Canada, including thirty-three of the Metropolitan's premieres. He became musical director of the famous Metropolitan Auditions of the Air, which continued for ten years and brought to light many young and valuable artists. He heard between seven hundred and eight hundred voices a year. He is the founder and director of the conservatories of Montreal and Quebec, both of which he modeled after the conservatories of Paris, Berlin, and Milan. He is interested primarily in the discovery of potential talent and the advancement of young people in music, and he has twice been conductor of the New England Preparatory School Festival at Boston. A thorough musician who gains the instant respect of professionals as soon as he mounts the podium, he is an ideal conductor for a festival or other concerts in which diverse musical elements must be drawn together quickly for a unified performance.

He has been awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Music by the University of Montreal and has been decorated by the governments of England and Denmark. His hobbies are collecting penguin figurines and cooking. He and his wife, Rose Bampton, the Metropolitan soprano, live on a farm at Southbury, Connecticut.



ERNEST WHITE

★ PROMINENT PERSONALITIES ★

ERNEST WHITE

Ernest White is an organist whose musical influence has been felt throughout the entire profession. A pupil of the late Lynwood Farnam, he is one of the few organists equally at home in the playing of old music, the moderns, and works from the romantic period; his experience in playing more than six hundred recitals has given him a broad view in assembling programs from a large repertoire.

He was among the first to direct attention to the music of Bach's contemporaries and forerunners by playing large portions of this literature in his concerts at St. James Church in Philadelphia. More recently, he has brought much contemporary music before the public and has, perhaps more than any other artist, been responsible for the present prominence and popularity of the organ music of Olivier Messiaen.

His approach to the organ is based upon long experience with 'intimate' organs — he has had a series of six, or is it seven, built for his own studio use — combined also with complete familiarity with large organs in reverberant buildings. To this might be added that he has played the organ with orchestra more than any other artist and excels in this field.

Well known as a master of registration, his clear and incisive ideas about touch have become 'gospel' for many an organist.

For three years he was head of the Department of Music at Bard College (Columbia University), leaving there to become organist of the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin in New York City. The distinguished musical program of this Church has brought him into the sphere of work for which he is best fitted. It is regarded as a model for liturgical churches throughout the United States.

During the first year of the New York World's Fair, Mr. White was organist of the Temple of Religion, where he gave recitals of organ music twice daily during the whole of the season.

Due to the frequency with which Mr. White has visited his home town and birthplace, London, Ontario, it might be said that his principal hobby has been planning his campaigns for the removal of music, organs, and other musical instruments across the border without vexing delay!

Organ Tone Compared with Tone of Other Instruments

Arthur Howes

As is well known, a musical note is actually a combination of different sounds, all of which are members of the harmonic series. They are so perfectly blended together that they create the illusion of a single unified tone. This illusion of hearing is a natural one and easily maintained so long as the entire sound comes from one sound-producing element and the complex pattern of vibration is unified from its source. It requires considerable art to create this illusion of unity in a tone whose components are contributed by several separate vibrating elements.

The violin string presents a clear example of the manner in which complex musical tones are produced. It vibrates in its entire length at a frequency which is the pitch accepted by the ear as a single note. It also vibrates in shorter segments which are fractional parts of the whole, each with a higher rate and producing a proportionately higher note. The two halves vibrate twice as fast as the whole string and produce the octave of the fundamental. Similarly, shorter fractional lengths of the string, as thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, vibrate at their own rates — three, four, five, and six times as fast as the entire string — and produce a twelfth, fifteenth, seventeenth, and nineteenth, respectively. The vibrating string breaks itself up into very small segments, so that all elements of the harmonic series up to the upper limit of human hearing are present in some degree in every note. The wooden body of a violin is drawn into sympathetic vibration with many of these components of the complete tone and, by its resonance, confirms and strengthens those elements of the harmonic series which give the instrument its own characteristic sound.

Much the same process takes place in wind instruments. The reed tongue in woodwinds and organ reeds, and the player's lips in brass instruments, set up vibrations at many different frequencies. The column of air in the tube vibrates in sympathy with some of these frequencies and thus gives definition and character to the tone.

In a flute or organ flue pipe, a jet of air blown against the open lip of the tube sets up an 'edge tone' vibration (similar to that of the wind 'whistling' around the corner of the house), which is immediately drawn into sympathetic vibration with the air in the tube, the volume and mass of which is fixed so as to vibrate at a predetermined rate. The body of air in the pipe vibrates harmonically also, i.e., more rapid vibrations of small portions of it are contained within the larger vibrations of the whole column. However, its tendency is to vibrate more as a unit, thus giving less prominence to elements of the harmonic series above the fundamental than does the violin

string, unless the diameter of the pipe is very small, so that the body of enclosed air is long and thin.

The difference between the characteristic tones of instruments is accountable in terms of the relative prominence of individual components of the harmonic series. The total energy of vibration in a single note is distributed differently through the various elements of the harmonic series in the tone of each instrument, so that we hear, for example, French horn quality or cello or flute quality. The tone of an oboe contains a twelfth that is louder than the fundamental. Brass instruments produce a very prominent seventeenth. A large proportion of the sound of all stringed instruments is distributed through the upper elements of the harmonic series, so that the fundamental is weaker than the overtones.

For the purposes of this study, two points are of the utmost importance. The first is that analysis of the tone of various instruments reveals the relative weakness of the fundamental in comparison with the overtones collectively, and that certain individual overtones are sometimes louder than the fundamental. The second is that a body of air in a pipe like a flute will not produce many and strong overtones. It may do so when it is long and thin or activated by human lips or a highly flexible vibrating reed tongue; but in organ flue pipes of the usual variety and dimensions the tone is relatively pure and foundational in character. Thus, it may be seen that organ tone may be made to approach the interesting complexity and color of other instruments by strengthening its naturally weak upper partials with mutations and mixtures. Of course, the illusion of a 'single' sound, that is so perfect when the tone comes from one instrument, is more difficult to achieve when the sounds are produced by several different pipes; but therein lies one of the principal techniques in the art of organ building. Organ builders in the past mastered this difficult accomplishment, and our contemporary builders are rapidly relearning the well-established and time-tested principles involved in it.

It is not possible by this means to imitate exactly any characteristic tones of other instruments, but it is possible to produce a variety and range of color that is comparable to the orchestral palette. Most slavish imitations of orchestral prototypes in the tone of organ pipes have resulted unhappily. The attempt to produce extreme differentiation between the tones of individual pipes which came with the advent of increased wind pressure resulted in highly individualized sounds that did not combine well and frequently sounded forced and ugly throughout most of their compass, perhaps a half dozen or more notes in their best range being acceptable.

It is possible, within the limits of free, unforced voicing, to produce a considerable variety of pleasing tone from single pipes. This variety, however, can be greatly augmented by combinations of stops speaking at different positions in the harmonic series, so as to strengthen and confirm particular tonal elements of which only traces are present in the foundation. All pipes must be voiced freely and gently, without a suggestion of forcing, in order to blend perfectly with the other elements in the series

of which they are part. Each component must be in balance with the others, and its tone must be bright enough so that the overtones of the lower-speaking pipes can reach upward and attach themselves to the vibrations produced by the higher-speaking pipes; and yet no single tone should be bright enough to be much more assertive than the others with which it is combined. These features are essential to the purpose of creating the illusion of unity among diverse elements of a composite tone coming from different pipes.

An interesting feature of a good mixture is the impression that it creates of being just another stop without conveying a particular sense of high pitch. This effect occurs when the broad, free tone of each rank — something smoother than a bright principal, more flutelike — blends with that of every other rank, and differential resultant vibrations are produced at the frequency of foundation tone. Such a mixture seems to produce simply a bright, clear 8′ tone. This, too, is a normal illusion of hearing and is easily demonstrable in some organs in which a very weak foundation stop, such as an echo salicional, will adequately support a full mixture; and when the foundation stop is silenced, the music still sounds normal.

One reason these physical phenomena are not always fully understood and appreciated is the fact that, during the experimental period of organ building (the early years of the electric blower), many organs were built in which mixtures and mutations did not blend with the foundation stops. Excessively large scales and high narrow mouths were used for 8′ stops, producing loud and dull tones devoid of the overtones which would enable them to reach upward and join themselves to the upper work. Even in chorus reeds, overtones were suppressed and all but eliminated. Tentative and timid treatment of mutations and mixtures in which salicional and gamba scales were used for their pipes produced scratchy, thin tone at these higher pitches. It is essential that these stops have pipes of approximately the same scale as, and sometimes larger than, the corresponding notes in the foundation stops with which they are to be associated. In most organs of that lamentable period, the tonal elements stood apart from each other and refused to associate themselves into a perfectly blended cohesive sound. Apparently, the higher wind pressure, which became possible with the application of electricity to the problem of wind supply, diverted attention to the unfortunate object of obtaining the maximum power and variety of tone from single pipes. Attempts to combine mixtures and mutations with that style of voicing were naturally unsuccessful.

Fortunately, however, we have now witnessed a fairly general return to established principles of organ building, in which the experience and knowledge of previous generations is utilized and combined with the findings of contemporary experience for the production of our excellent modern organs.

Perhaps the most important basis of comparison between organ tone and that of other instruments is a study of volume changes in relation to tone quality. In the violin, trumpet, piano, and all other musical instru-

ments, there is a pronounced change in tone color with each change in volume. Pianissimo tones are the smoothest and least brilliant, while each added increment of volume makes the tone more brilliant, until fortissimo is felt to be a sound of dramatic intensity because of its brilliance. In the quieter ranges of volume, expressive of repose, the tones are more purely foundational; and successive increases in volume, which gradually give the tone more climactic feeling, consist more and more of overtones. At fortissimo, the composition of the tone is so altered that a much greater proportion of the total sound is distributed through the upper elements of the harmonic series than is the case at pianissimo. To match this power of dramatic expressiveness common to all other musical instruments, it is essential that the changes of volume in an organ should be accompanied by corresponding changes in quality. This can be true only when the ensemble includes an appropriately limited number of brightly voiced foundation stops and a complement of full-voiced upper work which can add power *and* brilliance.

This volume scale with constantly changing quality is normal to all music except that of experimental organs of the high-pressure era. In them, the crescendo effected by adding a plethora of 8′ stops produced a swelling and powerful sound of a quality that remained nearly uniform throughout the entire volume range. In comparison with all other musical media, this peculiarity seemed unnatural, just as the tone of muted strings electrically amplified to a tremendous fortissimo, or a human whisper magnified a thousand times, would seem unnatural.

Fortunately, the 8′ organ seems about to become a curiosity, a relic of an unlamented former day. The modern organ of today, with its beautifully voiced mild foundation stops, its full complement of mixtures and mutations, and its brilliantly colorful and transparent chorus reeds, is an adequate vehicle for dramatic musical expression. It has already attracted the attention of contemporary composers. For this striking development, congratulations are due to our leading organ builders, who have been alert to chart a true course toward re-establishing the organ as a full-fledged member of the family of musical instruments.

Piano Practice for Organists

ROWLAND W. DUNHAM

What is it that makes it possible for our concert organists to give us such dramatic performances of organ music? How can they execute the intricate patterns of concert pieces, fast or slow, loud or soft, with such eloquent effect? Why are they able to end each program with a brilliant piece that proceeds smoothly and inevitably to its grand conclusion with every one of its rapid notes falling exactly into its right place?

It is because their musical imagination and feeling for interpretation is supported and implemented by a good technique. Technique is sometimes described as mastery of the details of artistic execution. This mastery is of the utmost importance. There has been a tendency to belittle emphasis on technique beyond the point of an ability to 'get by.' This attitude is the principal cause of the bungling and inadequacy that is all too frequently encountered in our profession. In a professional organist, technical weaknesses will inevitably result in musical ineptitude that will continue to reveal itself throughout his entire career in some of the things he does. A complete command of all physical movements involved in organ playing is requisite and necessary for beautiful and artistic performance.

Our instrument presents a peculiar problem not always fully understood, in that there are two different techniques that must be studied: the manipulation of the fingers on the manuals and the manipulation of the feet on the pedals. These two entirely different techniques should be examined, and at least a modicum of separate control must be achieved before coordination of the two may be approached with much prospect of success. Some of the organ primers go into much detail about these separate problems before proposing the combining of efforts. It is obvious that a student with serious shortcomings in either field will have small promise of becoming more than a mediocre organist. This article, however, deals only with the use of fingers and hands and increasing their skill. Organ teachers invariably demand some pianistic skill in their beginning students. Usually, this standard is far too low to insure a finger control commensurate with the later demands of the exceedingly difficult problem of coordination. Consequently, the aspiring organist is plagued by the pathetic lack of such control, unless something is done to bring about improvement. That something is usually never done, and the little matter of more finger control is thenceforth neglected. What wonder that organ students flounder helplessly when difficulties must be encountered! Is it strange that so many organists are harassed throughout their entire career by fumbling fingers and faltering feet?

Some writers project various finger exercises to be practiced on the organ manuals; but, generally, the few precious hours most students can find at the console need to be devoted to more special problems, particu-

larly manual and pedal coordination. Even if this were not so, the piano is preferable to the organ for the advancement of keyboard technique. This is due to the differences in key action and to the character of piano music. The piano keys require a more incisive and quicker finger motion. Evenness of touch, so important in developing equality and independence in the fingers, is more easily cultivated at the piano. At our instrument the keys may be moved by pressure, perhaps applied slowly and unevenly, and there is much holding. At the piano the fingers must execute definite quick strokes; and in piano music rapid passages have to be dealt with more frequently.

Several years ago, our good friend Tertius Noble wrote that *every* organist must give at least one hour daily to piano practice. Wiser counsel has never been offered to the profession. While few have heeded this suggestion, the soundness of Dr. Noble's prescription cannot be denied. It is my personal belief that even the busiest organist must follow this plan if he expects to move on in his work. One cannot stand still. There must be progress or stagnation (deterioration, of course).

Let us examine the problem of daily piano practice for the organist at close range. What is proposed must be based upon personal preferences. It must be realized that the type of hand has to be taken into account. Those with a medium-sized, flexible hand are at an immediate advantage, for they may find less time needed to accomplish desired results. The long tapering fingers, erroneously identified as characteristic of the "pianist's hand," are likely to make rapid movements, and adjustments to awkward positions and intricate passages, most difficult. Then, there is the tense, muscular hand, strong but lacking in flexibility. For these, ease in digital manipulation never comes without intelligent comprehension of their problems. In many instances, a first-class pianist should guide the organist in achieving an all-around keyboard facility, even if the organist should find himself compelled to develop pianistic virtuosity. In most cases where a sound training has already been undergone, the organist can work out his own practice details. The organist must, however, be aware of the natural character of his own hand, in order to practice to the greatest advantage.

If there is an hour to be given to the piano, a schedule must be made to insure the adequacy of coverage. I believe there ought to be a preliminary period devoted to some massage. This will stimulate the circulation and induce that 'alive' feeling which will make practice more fruitful. Firm but not harsh, massage by the thumb and fingers of one hand might start at the wrist, then the main body of the hand, and finally the fingers, giving attention to the web of skin between fingers and the sensitive finger tips. Manipulate each hand. The results may be most surprising.

Plain technical exercises are usually attacked at the outset. There are a number of good published books. My choice is the "School of Advanced Piano Playing," by Joseffy (Schirmer). These exercises cover all the details of technique. Each exercise demands a chromatic continuation through *every key*. Such experience is of great value to those who have trouble with

geographical complexities of the keyboard, and who find the clumsy hand position where the thumb must play black keys hazardous. It is imperative that concentration be given to those exercises designed to promote independence of the fingers under all sorts of conditions. A sort of 'daily dozen' sequence should be mapped out in this area with occasional changes to new exercises.

As a second venture, a quarter of an hour at least can be devoted to piano etudes. Nothing better is available than the Czerny "Art of Finger Dexterity," Opus 740. Here are to be found studies dealing with the manifold details of technique which need attention. One or two could be practiced — slowly at first — with a goal somewhat below the metronome indication, yet of a beneficial velocity. Keep changing as soon as a particular pair are well in hand. Some of the most valuable are Nos. 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 17, 21, 23, 25, 28, 31. Heavy chord or octave studies may be omitted. Etudes by Chopin, Liszt, and Debussy are recommended.

Scale practice may be undergone here, unless it seems better to work on velocity earlier. The ability to play rapidly on the piano will make organ-manual problems far easier to solve than most organists find them. It seems to me better to practice for a time on one scale, perhaps starting with D flat — four octaves — with one, two, then four notes to a count. The desideratum is eventually eight notes to a count with the metronome at 60. Below this, which is 480 notes per minute, the condition of your technique is definitely below par. Step it up to 72 if you really want to have an adequate piano foundation. A profitable variation is to play two notes in one hand against three in the other — both alternatives. Then try three against four to gain rhythmical experience. Every scale, major and minor, should be sampled in rotation. An organist who can cover the above item is not common, much as this is desirable.

For the remaining period there is a wide choice. Some days, the entire period will be given to technique alone. It is amazing to discover how the challenge of finger mastery will become so intriguing as to absorb the attention increasingly. Over the years, the organist should play over, with some concentration and at length, the sonatas of Beethoven and the "Well-Tempered Clavichord." Until these have been experienced — every note — no keyboard exponent is beyond the beginner stage. No attempt will here be made to describe the ineffable beauties of piano literature. The organist who knows a substantial portion of the piano repertoire has saturated himself with tonal beauty to the tremendous advantage of that elusive item we call "musicianship." He will have evolved a rather good musical taste. There will have been a stimulation of his imagination. Both of these attributes will serve him well in his own research into the special realm of his preference, the organ.

Busman's Holiday

Twenty-five years as a church organist establishes habits that are hard to break. Relief from this responsibility does not eliminate an irresistible gravitational pull, so that every Sunday morning finds this practitioner visiting the scene of some fellow organist's labors and enjoying himself immensely and, of course, exercising that God-given right of all members of congregations everywhere, to be critical. To be savored to the full, my new status as a member of the congregation is best enjoyed in a different church each Sunday morning, where anonymity elicits the full treatment for strangers and newcomers!

Something like a complete metamorphosis of one's point of view accompanies the transition from bench to pew. Church-going is now a much more enjoyable experience. Unconcerned with the mechanics of production, and unaware of the conflicting purposes and personalities that are often prominent behind the scenes, I am now able to give free and untrammeled attention to the purposes and philosophy of the occasion and derive pleasure and satisfaction from it. Sermons seem to have improved immeasurably; all ministers seem to be handsome, genial, and admirable fellows; even the vestrymen or deacons who take up the collection lend more dignified and impressive support to the cause than ever before.

By now somewhat accustomed to my new standing, I feel prompted to defend my new associates against a charge that is often made by organists. Although it is undoubtedly true that many congregations do drag in singing hymns, my recent observation as a member of various congregations indicates that they do not intentionally nor even consciously do so. Dragging is usually the result of circumstances beyond *their* control. Not always, however, beyond the control of the organist!

The organ is a powerful musical instrument, usually strong enough to make the largest congregation aware of both pitch and rhythm, even while singing loudly. The organist's function is, therefore, twofold: both to accompany and to lead the congregation in hymn-singing. It is the latter function that some organists neglect. I have several times heard beautiful performances of preludes, postludes, and voluntaries at services in which the hymns did not go well because the organists failed to establish a good tempo and to maintain it consistently. Congregations generally are untrained and unrehearsed singers, so that the simplest and most straightforward performance of a hymn is all that should be attempted. All fancy 'effects', such as dramatic retards and pauses and sudden pianissimos, are difficult and confusing to them. On the other hand, it is a relatively simple matter to sing the melody of a hymn in perfectly strict time (much easier than to manipulate keys, pedals, stops, et cetera, in strict time); and congregations may be relied upon to do it if the organist introduces the hymn at the tempo which he intends to use throughout, and then plays

each verse in a manner which keeps the congregation aware of the beat at all times.

Among the points I have observed that seem to me to hinder good congregational singing are the following:

Playing the tune over at a tempo other than that used for the first verse and subsequent verses. The introduction should enliven the musical feeling and sense of rhythm of everyone present, so that all can join in at the appropriate moment at a pace that has already been set.

Frequent retards at ends of verses and even at ends of lines. Such overinterpretation has no dramatic effect whatever, and only makes it difficult for the congregation to keep with the organ. As they put their books down at the end of the last verse, they *may* agree with your feeling of finality expressed by a slight retard, but only if the hymn is long.

Too frequent use of unrhythmic pauses between lines. Between the long lines of Lutheran chorales, the interpolated time should always be one or two beats, in accordance with the established pattern (now written out in some hymnals); and the occasional points at which short breaths must be allowed for between lines should never exceed the minimum of time required for such a breath. Nothing more than a break in the legato is necessary at most breathing places. Several times I felt that I was made to pause awkwardly with foot in mid-air, so to speak, before taking the next step. Others around me plunged into the musical vacuum and were embarrassed to hear themselves singing *a cappella*.

Unrhythmic playing, superlegato, and holding down repeated notes, especially in the pedal and lower parts. All repeated notes except those occurring between the beats should be given a strong attack by shortening the first one, usually cutting it in half. In some churches, it is necessary to make a slight separation after every note, so that nothing is played quite legato. A good brass band gives a clear attack to each new note, and hymns sound fine and vigorous when played that way on the organ.

Ineffective registration. Too often, such a thick wall of dull, opaque tone emanates from the organ chamber that it is discouraging to try to sing with it. Unfortunately, no organist can overcome the handicap of an 8′ organ whose loud tones are just diapasons and still more diapasons. Such heavy tone at the same pitch as the voices tends to overwhelm the vocal tone and to cancel it out by interference. It makes it impossible for the singers to hear themselves and to enjoy the thrill of blending their voices with a large group. The ideal full combination for supporting congregational singing should extend through the gamut of pitch from lowest to highest stops, so that its tone *surrounds* that of the singers. They can hear and feel it both above and below the pitch of their own voices, even when it is far below the maximum volume.

The organist simply should not permit the congregation to drag. If he has chosen a tempo that is not impossible for them (remember that large bodies move slowly, and also that long lines sometimes are difficult to sing

at a slow tempo), he should so dominate the performance by the rhythmic vitality of his playing and the inexorable, unyielding regularity of his beat throughout each verse, that it is literally impossible for anyone not to sing with him. It is often felt to be desirable to relax from the tyranny of the fixed beat between verses (don't count out the brief pause), so that it can be freshly resumed with each new verse.

During my pilgrimages, I have heard much good organ-playing, beautiful choral work, and many demonstrations of excellent musicianship. A layman would probably feel that the playing of hymns is the organist's most important duty; it is the one thing which many musicians seem to neglect. It is easy for untrained singers to keep strict time. Don't let them find out what a difficult matter this can be for an organist!

A. H.

NOTE: — "Busman's Holiday" will be a regular feature of the ORGAN INSTITUTE QUARTERLY. Constructive criticism of musical performance in church services will be contributed by various members of the Editorial Board.

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The 8′ pitch is the tonal axis, so let us consider the Great organ from that starting point. Our choice of 8′ tone is determined by the need of having a narrow or a broad basis. The Salicional provides the narrow starting point, while the Flute gives a broad and filling element. Together, these two stops form the sort of effect regarded as Diapason tone. In having two stops to produce this effect instead of one, we may influence both the color and the amount of this tone.

In the singing 4′ level there is again a narrow and a wide basis. Since the full 4′ tone should be stronger than the full 8′ tone, the narrow element is provided by a Prestant, one of the keenest and most singing colors of the Principal family.

The color harmonic line is carried by the 2⅔′, which should be of open and freely developed quality.

The brilliant pitch outline, 2′, should have even more keenness (not loudness necessarily) than the Prestant.

The grave element is a Quintaton. Few organs can have the luxury of both open and closed 16′ pipes, so the Quintaton is suggested as a hybrid. This stop has a set of flute color harmonics — yet a rather stringlike tone, which allows it to be a chameleon.

For the Mixture tone, the Fourniture is composed of the 8′ harmonics, and the Cymbale belongs to the 4′ tonal series. There is an old saying that the Mixtures are the organ; and they should have enough other stops with them to support and nourish this fiery and colorful tone. The Mixtures do two things: (1) differentiate the quality of each octave throughout the keyboard (by means of breaks), and yet keep the same over-all effect; (2) generate more unison tone by the action of the quints against the unisons. This phenomenon we considered in the article on the Positiv organ. A Nazard and a 4′ stop will generate unison tone — not any great quantity, but it is definitely there, and of a most cohesive quality. In such a manner the Mixtures broaden the tonal basis.

A Mixture has its greatest effect in the low octave. In this range the topmost ranks are at their farthest distance from the unison pitch and

*This is the second article of a series by this eminent authority on organs and organ tone. The first article, "Registration with a Small Unenclosed Positiv," which appeared in the 1951 summer issue, may be obtained by sending 25 cents to the Organ Institute.

hence give the greatest color. In the next octave there is a slight breaking back in pitch, so that, the range being not so great, there is a diminution in color but also an increase in strength. Similarly, in the succeeding octaves the color is reduced and the strength and weight increased. The top octave of any Mixture does not exceed the pitch of a 2′ stop.

We usually begin with the 8′ pitch line; but since we know that the eventual quality will depend upon the distance between the highest and lowest elements in the tone and how this gap is filled in, we must extend our thinking so as to consider, first, these two farthest-distant elements (as 8′ and 1′), and then how the combination shall be modified by intermediate pitches (as 4′ or $2\frac{2}{3}'$).

In much old music there are fugal episodes written in two parts to be played upon one manual. Without Mixtures, these parts are equal except in pitch. With Mixtures, because the voices occupy different positions in the keyboard, they each possess a different color, yet the tone is similar. It is truly the effect of two manuals produced from one keyboard.

By such an arrangement as is outlined above, we have stops available for color and for solo use; yet they are, as well, ensemble stops of the first order. In this type of scheme the player has the maximum number of uses of all the pipes in the division.

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Organ Institute Summer Sessions

It has been frequently suggested that the Organ Institute conduct a summer session at some point other than Andover that would be more convenient for organists in the Western States. Accordingly, this year there will be a three weeks' session, from July 7 to July 26, at the University of Texas in Austin, in addition to a three weeks' session at Andover, from July 28 to August 16.

The facilities at the University of Texas College of Fine Arts are unexcelled. The 100-stop Aeolian-Skinner organ is one of the finest in the United States and is notable for the extent to which it combines outstanding virtues of organ design of several periods. It is located in an acoustically designed, air-conditioned recital hall that is felt to be ideal for organ concerts. Practice organs, also, are installed in air-conditioned rooms. Dormitories and air-conditioned dining halls are part of a beautiful campus whose buildings have frequently appeared in the pages of architectural magazines.

Nearby are historic San Antonio with its Mexican Village, sixteenth-century Spanish missions, the ranch country, and the mountains of West Texas. Also available to Organ Institute students will be the Barton Springs Pool, fed with invigorating spring water at 65° the year round.

The beautiful Andover campus and the summer attractions of New England are well known. Organ Institute students usually enjoy the beaches at Ipswich and Rye, trips to the White Mountains, historic Salem and Newburyport, and other New England towns.

The curriculum for both sessions has been planned so as to permit greater opportunities for private lessons, and the master classes are being offered at a lower cost to those students who do not wish to play for the criticism of the faculty in the presence of the class.

In addition to detailed discussions of technique, registration, interpretation, methods of practicing, and memorization, there will be a full treatment of teaching problems and materials, and a detailed consideration of organ structure and design. The course is intended to give students a full presentation of the ideas and methods of each instructor. It will be of great value to auditors as well as to performing members of the class.

This year, a second course will be offered for those who are preparing to take American Guild of Organists examinations. It will consist of daily seminars in the working of examination papers, conducted by members of the faculty of the Organ Institute and of the faculty of the Department of Music of the University of Texas. The presentation of this course will depend upon the number of students who register for it.

Scholarship grants will be awarded to persons of outstanding qualifications who would be unable to attend the session without such financial assistance.

Prospects indicate a full enrollment for both sessions; it is desirable to make an early application.

1952 Repertoire

Works to be studied in class will be chosen from among the following in accordance with students' interests and requirements. An asterisk indicates selections that will be part of a predetermined agenda.

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This organ at St. Jacob's Church in Prague might properly be said to be "baroque".

★ ★ EDITORIAL ★ ★

Baroque?

It is unfortunate that the term 'baroque' was ever applied to organs. Formerly used mainly in connection with architecture and decorative arts, the word connoted something more than disdain, because of the seventeenth century's characteristic tendency toward excessive ornamentation. The organs of that period, however, were generally much smaller and less elaborate than those of the present day; and many modern organists would call their simplicity and limitations 'severe.' Further, we know of no organs in this country that could justifiably be called 'baroque' in any reasonable sense of that word. Two museums in New England house instruments whose tonal resources suggest baroque character because of the absence of swell shutters and many stops that are characteristic of more recent periods; but these instruments are built and voiced in accordance with modern practices. The modern electro-pneumatic action cannot make pipes speak and sound exactly like pipes that are winded by slider-and-pallet chests, and voicing techniques have had to be adapted to the new type of action.

We suspect that those who have persistently applied the term 'baroque' to the modern organ have done so in protest against the relegation to secondary importance of certain tonal effects that were all too prominent in organs of a generation ago, and against the re-establishment of the type of organ tone that made our instrument great in the past. There was a time when constant use of orchestral imitative voices, celestes, chimes, and the ugly batteries of loud 8′ diapasons and tubas, stripped of all brightness and interest by their voicers, so obscured the musical values of the excellent music composed for the organ that organists took to playing transcriptions, in the hope that 'sure-fire' ear-ticklers and extremely dramatic pieces could withstand the abuse of performance on such an instrument, and please an audience. Those who have attended that type of organ school may have understandable difficulty in perceiving the great beauty of real organ music, and real organ music cannot be made to come alive on such instruments.

However, all that is past, and modern organs happily enable us to give our attention to organ music of every period, so that there is no longer any reason to be completely preoccupied with the meager output of the nineteenth century, of necessity augmented by romantic transcriptions. The period during which the organ was acknowledged to be King of Instruments, and all composers wrote for it, has given us a great literature of

magnificently beautiful music; and composers of the present day are again turning to the organ, so that truly varied programs may now be presented on the organ, as in other fields of music.

Recently we noticed the music of Bach's great contemporaries and forerunners referred to as "graveyard music" and modern French organ music described as "untuneful" and "atrocious." Organists who play it were accused of excessive use of mixtures and of exerting a sinister influence on their innocent pupils. The writer seemed to view with alarm nearly all the developments of the past twenty-five years. This seems to us to be a piece of presumption. An appropriate reply might be to say that the cause of organ music is being seriously impeded by the presence on organ benches of persons who are completely insensitive to the charm and beauty, not only of contemporary organ music, but of the established classics from the organ's greatest period.

However, we are not disturbed by these protests against the course of musical evolution. We subscribe to the principle that in all art, and especially in music, there is room for wide latitude of individual opinion and preference with respect to both performance and appreciation. Any organist may use as many mixtures as he likes, and also may specialize altogether in the music of Mendelssohn, Rheinberger, and Guilmant if such be his preference. Let every organist extend his influence as far as possible! We are quite content for everyone to follow his own best judgment. As long as any part of the public is willing to pay anybody to either build or play what others regard as an artistic monstrosity, the so-called 'romantic' organ (a terrible abuse of that word,) let them continue to do so. We suspect it may not be for very long. In the meantime, the rest of us will continue to be guided by our musical purposes and insights, to explore larger fields and wider horizons. We are happy to be able to report that our efforts to please the public seem to be successful. Public interest in our offerings is increasing.

A. H.

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